
Terrorism: Where Does it Come From?



*“No group or nation should mistake America’s intentions:
We will not rest until terrorist groups of global reach
have been found, have been stopped, and have been defeated.”*

President George W. Bush
November 6, 2001

**Information compiled by
The Information Resource Center
Embassy of the United States of America**

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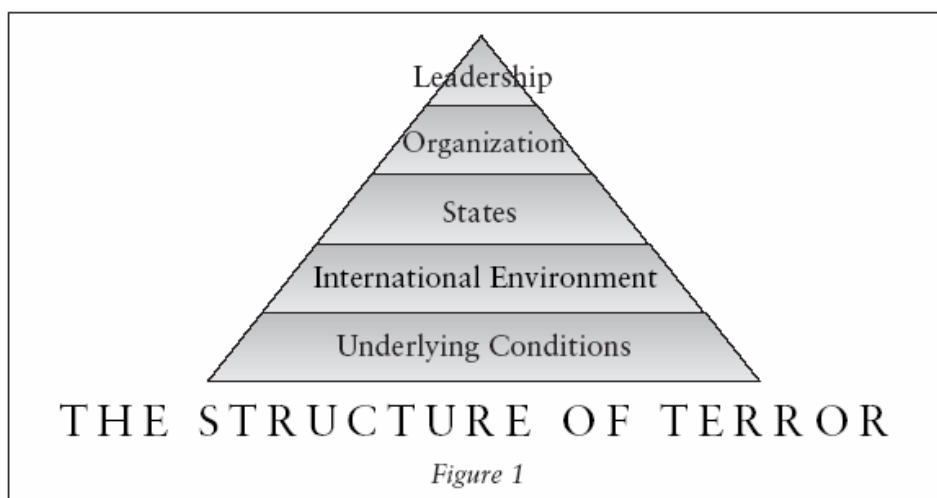
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Introduction

The Information Resource Center (IRC) of the Embassy of the United States in Madrid has prepared this information packet.

1. Excerpts from the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism.

The Structure of Terror



Despite their diversity in motive, sophistication, and strength, terrorist organizations share a basic structure as depicted in figure 1. At the base, underlying conditions such as poverty, corruption, religious conflict and ethnic strife create opportunities for terrorists to exploit. Some of these conditions are real and some manufactured. Terrorists use these conditions to justify their actions and expand their support. The belief that terror is a legitimate means to address such conditions and effect political change is a fundamental problem enabling terrorism to develop and grow.

The international environment defines the boundaries within which terrorists' strategies take shape. As a result of freer, more open borders this environment unwittingly provides access to havens, capabilities, and other support to terrorists. But access alone is not enough.

Terrorists must have a physical base from which to operate. Whether through ignorance, inability, or intent, states around the world still offer havens—both physical (e.g., safe houses, training grounds) and virtual (e.g., reliable communication and financial networks)—that terrorists need to plan, organize, train, and conduct their operations. Once entrenched in a safe operating environment, the organization can begin to solidify and expand. The terrorist organization's structure, membership, resources, and security determine its capabilities and reach.

At the top of the structure, the terrorist leadership provides the overall direction and strategy that links all these factors and thereby breathes life into a terror campaign. The leadership becomes the catalyst for terrorist action. The loss of the leadership can cause many organizations

to collapse. Some groups, however, are more resilient and can promote new leadership should the original fall or fail.

Still others have adopted a more decentralized organization with largely autonomous cells, making our challenge even greater.

The Changing Nature of Terrorism

While retaining this basic structure, the terrorist challenge has changed considerably over the past decade and likely will continue to evolve. Ironically, the particular nature of the terrorist threat we face today springs in large part from some of our past successes. In the 1970s and 1980s, the United States and its allies combated generally secular and nationalist terrorist groups, many of which depended upon active state sponsors. While problems of state sponsorship of terrorism continue, years of sustained counterterrorism efforts, including diplomatic and economic isolation, have convinced some governments to curtail or even abandon support for terrorism as a tool of statecraft. The collapse of the Soviet Union—which provided critical backing to terrorist groups and certain state sponsors—accelerated the decline in state sponsorship. Many terrorist organizations were effectively destroyed or neutralized, including the Red Army Faction, Direct Action, and Communist Combatant Cells in Europe, and the Japanese Red Army in Asia. Such past successes provide valuable lessons for the future.

With the end of the Cold War, we also saw dramatic improvements in the ease of transnational communication, commerce, and travel. Unfortunately, the terrorists adapted to this new international environment and turned the advances of the 20th century into the destructive enablers of the 21st century.

A New Global Environment

Al-Qaida exemplifies how terrorist networks have twisted the benefits and conveniences of our increasingly open, integrated, and modernized world to serve their destructive agenda. The al-Qaida network is a multinational enterprise with operations in more than 60 countries. Its camps in Afghanistan provided sanctuary and its bank accounts served as a trust fund for terrorism. Its global activities are coordinated through the use of personal couriers and communication technologies emblematic of our era—cellular and satellite phones, encrypted e-mail, internet chat rooms, videotape, and CD-roms. Like a skilled publicist, Usama bin Laden and al-Qaida have exploited the international media to project his image and message worldwide.

Members of al-Qaida have traveled from continent to continent with the ease of a vacationer or business traveler. Despite our coalition's successes in Afghanistan and around the world, some al-Qaida operatives have escaped to plan additional terrorist attacks. In an age marked by unprecedented mobility and migration, they readily blend into communities wherever they move. They pay their way with funds raised through front businesses, drug trafficking, credit card fraud, extortion, and money from covert supporters. They use ostensibly charitable organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for funding and recruitment. Money for their operations is transferred

surreptitiously through numerous banks, money exchanges, and alternate remittance systems (often known as “hawalas”)—some legitimate and unwitting, others not.

These terrorists are also transnational in another, more fundamental way—their victims. The September 11 attacks murdered citizens from Australia, Brazil, China, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Germany, India, Israel, Jordan, Japan, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and scores of other countries.

As the al-Qaida network demonstrates, the terrorist threat today is mutating into something quite different from its predecessors. Terrorists can now use the advantage of technology to disperse leadership, training, and logistics not just regionally but globally. Establishing and moving cells in virtually any country is relatively easy in a world where more than 140 million people live outside of their country of origin and millions of people cross international borders every day.

Furthermore, terrorist groups have become increasingly self-sufficient by exploiting the global environment to support their operations. Whether it is the FARC’s involvement in the cocaine trade in Colombia, al-Qaida’s profiting from the poppy fields in Afghanistan, or Abu Sayyaf’s kidnapping for profit in the Philippines, terrorists are increasingly using criminal activities to support and fund their terror. In addition to finding sanctuary within the boundaries of a state sponsor, terrorists often seek out states where they can operate with impunity because the central government is unable to stop them. Such areas are found in the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. More audaciously, foreign terrorists also establish cells in the very open, liberal, and tolerant societies that they plan to attack.

Terrorist Organizations

The terrorist threat is a flexible, transnational network structure, enabled by modern technology and characterized by loose interconnectivity both within and between groups. In this environment, terrorists work together in funding, sharing intelligence, training, logistics, planning, and executing attacks. Terrorist groups with objectives in one country or region can draw strength and support from groups in other countries or regions. For example, in 2001, three members of the Irish Republican Army were arrested in Colombia, suspected of training the FARC in how to conduct an urban bombing campaign. The connections between al-Qaida and terrorist groups throughout Southeast Asia further highlight this reality. The terrorist threat today is both resilient and diffuse because of this mutually reinforcing, dynamic network structure.

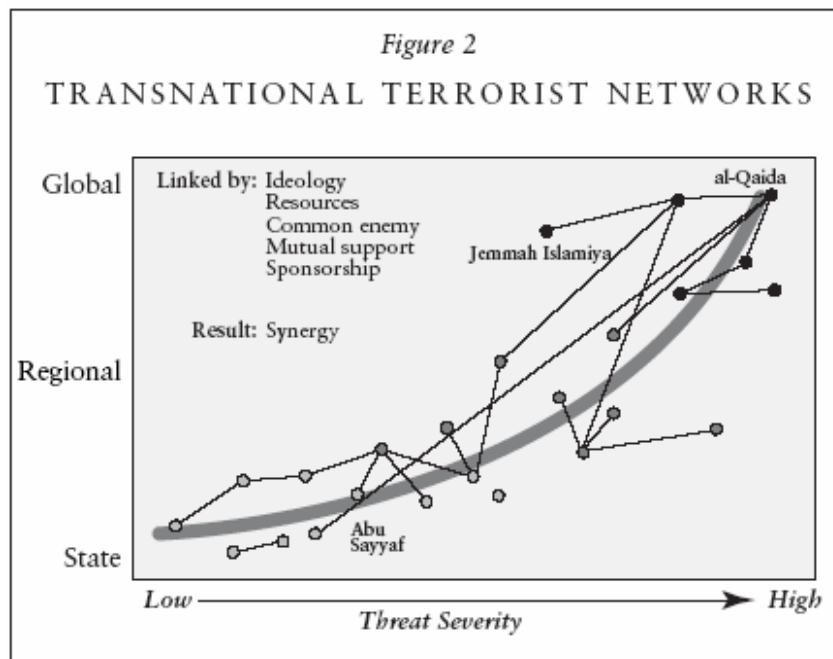


Figure 2 is representative of how terrorists and terrorist organizations operate on three levels. At the first level are those terrorist organizations that operate primarily within a single country. Their reach is limited, but in this global environment their actions can have international consequences. Such state-level groups may expand geographically if their ambitions and capabilities are allowed to grow unchecked.

At the next level are terrorist organizations that operate regionally. These regional operations transcend at least one international boundary. Terrorist organizations with global reach comprise the third category. Their operations span several regions and their ambitions can be transnational and even global.

These three types of organizations are linked together in two ways. First, they can cooperate directly by sharing intelligence, personnel, expertise, resources, and safe havens. Second, they can support each other in less direct ways, such as by promoting the same ideological agenda and reinforcing each other's efforts to cultivate a favorable international image for their "cause." By capitalizing on the very technological advances that we use within our country, terrorist organizations learn and share information garnered from our web sites, exploit vulnerabilities within our critical infrastructure, and communicate across the same internet paths we use each day. The interconnected nature of terrorist organizations necessitates that we pursue them across the geographic spectrum to ensure that all linkages between the strong and the weak organizations are broken, leaving each of them isolated, exposed, and vulnerable to defeat.

Source: The White House, February, 2003

http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/counter_terrorism/counter_terrorism_strategy.pdf

2. Excerpts from the State of the Union Address. February 2, 2005.

President George W. Bush
Chamber of the U.S. House of Representatives
The United States Capitol
Washington, D.C.
February 2, 2005

Our third responsibility to future generations is to leave them an America that is safe from danger, and protected by peace. We will pass along to our children all the freedoms we enjoy -- and chief among them is freedom from fear.

In the three and a half years since September the 11th, 2001, we have taken unprecedented actions to protect Americans. We've created a new department of government to defend our homeland, focused the FBI on preventing terrorism, begun to reform our intelligence agencies, broken up terror cells across the country, expanded research on defenses against biological and chemical attack, improved border security, and trained more than a half-million first responders. Police and firefighters, air marshals, researchers, and so many others are working every day to make our homeland safer, and we thank them all. (Applause.)

Our nation, working with allies and friends, has also confronted the enemy abroad, with measures that are determined, successful, and continuing. The al Qaeda terror network that attacked our country still has leaders -- but many of its top commanders have been removed. There are still governments that sponsor and harbor terrorists -- but their number has declined. There are still regimes seeking weapons of mass destruction -- but no longer without attention and without consequence. Our country is still the target of terrorists who want to kill many, and intimidate us all -- and we will stay on the offensive against them, until the fight is won. (Applause.)

Pursuing our enemies is a vital commitment of the war on terror -- and I thank the Congress for providing our servicemen and women with the resources they have needed. During this time of war, we must continue to support our military and give them the tools for victory. (Applause.)

Other nations around the globe have stood with us. In Afghanistan, an international force is helping provide security. In Iraq, 28 countries have troops on the ground, the United Nations and the European Union provided technical assistance for the elections, and NATO is leading a mission to help train Iraqi officers. We're cooperating with 60 governments in the Proliferation Security Initiative, to detect and stop the transit of dangerous materials. We're working closely with the governments in Asia to convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and nine other countries have captured or detained al Qaeda terrorists. In the next four years, my administration will continue to build the coalitions that will defeat the dangers of our time. (Applause.)

In the long-term, the peace we seek will only be achieved by eliminating the conditions that feed radicalism and ideologies of murder. If whole regions of the world remain in despair and grow in hatred, they will be the recruiting grounds for terror, and that terror will stalk America and other free nations for decades. The only force powerful enough to stop the rise of tyranny and terror, and replace hatred with hope, is the force of human freedom. (Applause.) Our enemies know this, and that is why the terrorist Zarqawi recently declared war on what he called the "evil principle" of democracy. And we've declared our own intention: America will stand with the allies of freedom

to support democratic movements in the Middle East and beyond, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world. (Applause.)

The United States has no right, no desire, and no intention to impose our form of government on anyone else. That is one of the main differences between us and our enemies. They seek to impose and expand an empire of oppression, in which a tiny group of brutal, self-appointed rulers control every aspect of every life. Our aim is to build and preserve a community of free and independent nations, with governments that answer to their citizens, and reflect their own cultures. And because democracies respect their own people and their neighbors, the advance of freedom will lead to peace. (Applause.)

That advance has great momentum in our time -- shown by women voting in Afghanistan, and Palestinians choosing a new direction, and the people of Ukraine asserting their democratic rights and electing a president. We are witnessing landmark events in the history of liberty. And in the coming years, we will add to that story. (Applause.)

The beginnings of reform and democracy in the Palestinian territories are now showing the power of freedom to break old patterns of violence and failure. Tomorrow morning, Secretary of State Rice departs on a trip that will take her to Israel and the West Bank for meetings with Prime Minister Sharon and President Abbas. She will discuss with them how we and our friends can help the Palestinian people end terror and build the institutions of a peaceful, independent, democratic state. To promote this democracy, I will ask Congress for \$350 million to support Palestinian political, economic, and security reforms. The goal of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace, is within reach -- and America will help them achieve that goal. (Applause.)

To promote peace and stability in the broader Middle East, the United States will work with our friends in the region to fight the common threat of terror, while we encourage a higher standard of freedom. Hopeful reform is already taking hold in an arc from Morocco to Jordan to Bahrain. The government of Saudi Arabia can demonstrate its leadership in the region by expanding the role of its people in determining their future. And the great and proud nation of Egypt, which showed the way toward peace in the Middle East, can now show the way toward democracy in the Middle East. (Applause.)

To promote peace in the broader Middle East, we must confront regimes that continue to harbor terrorists and pursue weapons of mass murder. Syria still allows its territory, and parts of Lebanon, to be used by terrorists who seek to destroy every chance of peace in the region. You have passed, and we are applying, the Syrian Accountability Act -- and we expect the Syrian government to end all support for terror and open the door to freedom. (Applause.) Today, Iran remains the world's primary state sponsor of terror -- pursuing nuclear weapons while depriving its people of the freedom they seek and deserve. We are working with European allies to make clear to the Iranian regime that it must give up its uranium enrichment program and any plutonium reprocessing, and end its support for terror. And to the Iranian people, I say tonight: As you stand for your own liberty, America stands with you. (Applause.)

Our generational commitment to the advance of freedom, especially in the Middle East, is now being tested and honored in Iraq. That country is a vital front in the war on terror, which is why the terrorists have chosen to make a stand there. Our men and women in uniform are fighting terrorists in Iraq, so we do not have to face them here at home. (Applause.) And the victory of freedom in Iraq will strengthen a new ally in the war on terror, inspire democratic reformers from Damascus

to Tehran, bring more hope and progress to a troubled region, and thereby lift a terrible threat from the lives of our children and grandchildren.

We will succeed because the Iraqi people value their own liberty -- as they showed the world last Sunday. (Applause.) Across Iraq, often at great risk, millions of citizens went to the polls and elected 275 men and women to represent them in a new Transitional National Assembly. A young woman in Baghdad told of waking to the sound of mortar fire on election day, and wondering if it might be too dangerous to vote. She said, "Hearing those explosions, it occurred to me -- the insurgents are weak, they are afraid of democracy, they are losing. So I got my husband, and I got my parents, and we all came out and voted together."

Americans recognize that spirit of liberty, because we share it. In any nation, casting your vote is an act of civic responsibility; for millions of Iraqis, it was also an act of personal courage, and they have earned the respect of us all. (Applause.)

One of Iraq's leading democracy and human rights advocates is Safia Taleb al-Suhail. She says of her country, "We were occupied for 35 years by Saddam Hussein. That was the real occupation. Thank you to the American people who paid the cost, but most of all, to the soldiers." Eleven years ago, Safia's father was assassinated by Saddam's intelligence service. Three days ago in Baghdad, Safia was finally able to vote for the leaders of her country -- and we are honored that she is with us tonight. (Applause.)

The terrorists and insurgents are violently opposed to democracy, and will continue to attack it. Yet, the terrorists' most powerful myth is being destroyed. The whole world is seeing that the car bombers and assassins are not only fighting coalition forces, they are trying to destroy the hopes of Iraqis, expressed in free elections. And the whole world now knows that a small group of extremists will not overturn the will of the Iraqi people. (Applause.)

We will succeed in Iraq because Iraqis are determined to fight for their own freedom, and to write their own history. As Prime Minister Allawi said in his speech to Congress last September, "Ordinary Iraqis are anxious to shoulder all the security burdens of our country as quickly as possible." That is the natural desire of an independent nation, and it is also the stated mission of our coalition in Iraq. The new political situation in Iraq opens a new phase of our work in that country.

At the recommendation of our commanders on the ground, and in consultation with the Iraqi government, we will increasingly focus our efforts on helping prepare more capable Iraqi security forces -- forces with skilled officers and an effective command structure. As those forces become more self-reliant and take on greater security responsibilities, America and its coalition partners will increasingly be in a supporting role. In the end, Iraqis must be able to defend their own country -- and we will help that proud, new nation secure its liberty.

Recently an Iraqi interpreter said to a reporter, "Tell America not to abandon us." He and all Iraqis can be certain: While our military strategy is adapting to circumstances, our commitment remains firm and unchanging. We are standing for the freedom of our Iraqi friends, and freedom in Iraq will make America safer for generations to come. (Applause.) We will not set an artificial timetable for leaving Iraq, because that would embolden the terrorists and make them believe they can wait us out. We are in Iraq to achieve a result: A country that is democratic, representative of all its people, at peace with its neighbors, and able to defend itself. And when that result is achieved, our men and women serving in Iraq will return home with the honor they have earned. (Applause.)

Right now, Americans in uniform are serving at posts across the world, often taking great risks on my orders. We have given them training and equipment; and they have given us an example of idealism and character that makes every American proud. (Applause.) The volunteers of our military are unrelenting in battle, unwavering in loyalty, unmatched in honor and decency, and every day they're making our nation more secure. Some of our servicemen and women have survived terrible injuries, and this grateful country will do everything we can to help them recover. (Applause.) And we have said farewell to some very good men and women, who died for our freedom, and whose memory this nation will honor forever.

One name we honor is Marine Corps Sergeant Byron Norwood of Pflugerville, Texas, who was killed during the assault on Fallujah. His mom, Janet, sent me a letter and told me how much Byron loved being a Marine, and how proud he was to be on the front line against terror. She wrote, "When Byron was home the last time, I said that I wanted to protect him like I had since he was born. He just hugged me and said, 'You've done your job, Mom. Now it is my turn to protect you.'" Ladies and gentlemen, with grateful hearts, we honor freedom's defenders, and our military families, represented here this evening by Sergeant Norwood's mom and dad, Janet and Bill Norwood. (Applause.)

In these four years, Americans have seen the unfolding of large events. We have known times of sorrow, and hours of uncertainty, and days of victory. In all this history, even when we have disagreed, we have seen threads of purpose that unite us. The attack on freedom in our world has reaffirmed our confidence in freedom's power to change the world. We are all part of a great venture: To extend the promise of freedom in our country, to renew the values that sustain our liberty, and to spread the peace that freedom brings.

As Franklin Roosevelt once reminded Americans, "Each age is a dream that is dying, or one that is coming to birth." And we live in the country where the biggest dreams are born. The abolition of slavery was only a dream -- until it was fulfilled. The liberation of Europe from fascism was only a dream -- until it was achieved. The fall of imperial communism was only a dream -- until, one day, it was accomplished. Our generation has dreams of its own, and we also go forward with confidence. The road of Providence is uneven and unpredictable -- yet we know where it leads: It leads to freedom.

Thank you, and may God bless America. (Applause.)



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